



News from **SALEM COUNTY**

Office of Public Information

Earl R. Gage – Salem County Administrator
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SALEM COUNTY OFFICIALS MEET WITH FEMA AND OTHER STATE REPRESENTATIVES: STATE OF EMERGENCY

(SALEM, NJ)—Deputy Freeholder Director David Lindenmuth, Chair of the County Public Safety Committee, coordinated today with County officials a meeting and site visit with FEMA representatives, the New Jersey State Police, and representatives from the Departments of Transportation and Environmental Protection as the process leading to a declared state of Emergency in Salem, Cumberland and Gloucester County progresses.

Freeholder Lindenmuth explained that on Wednesday of this week all three counties involved in the effects of the devastating storm on Sunday submitted their preliminary reports, cost estimates and requests for State and Federal assistance. The next step in the process, which began today, was a coordinated site visit and inspection so that FEMA could learn firsthand the extent of the crisis.

“Once this team gathers the necessary inspection reports they will be submitted to the State so that the Governor can make an informed decision as to the declaration of a State of Emergency and recommendation to President Obama for further action,” Lindenmuth said.

The County designated team leader in this process is Jeff Pompper, Emergency Management Coordinator. Working with him internally are Jeff Ridgway, Public Works, William Sumiel, Engineers Office, Scott Haines, Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator, and Earl Gage, County Administrator.

Freeholder Bruce Bobbitt, Chair of the County Works Department, again praised the efforts of County workers as they continue to struggle to get as many roadways open as possible.

“This has been a massive effort,” Bobbit said, “but our Salem County team has worked many long hours in ensuring the safety of the public.”

He further noted that additional information received today includes the report that three dams have suffered significant damage that must also be addressed. Those dams include Elmer, Centerton, and Palentine. Centerton Dam has completely failed, but according to officials it had been drained for some time with ongoing problems.



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Many residents have made inquiries of County officials as to where they may seek financial aid if their properties have been adversely affected by water damage. County officials stated that any citizen that has property damage as a result of the storm event of August 14, 2011 should first contact their insurance company and submit a claim. They should also document the damage through receipts and pictures. If a State and Federal State of Emergency is declared FEMA will designate a site within the area where claims may be submitted. FEMA will also supply contact information that includes websites, phone and fax numbers to handle resident's inquiries.

"Our first priority is always the safety and well being of the residents of this County," said Freeholder Director Lee Ware. "I pledge the full support and cooperation of all County agencies in obtaining the State and Federal designations that will assist our folks in getting them back on their feet and to reopen and repair the damaged infrastructure of this County."

Freeholder Bobbitt further noted that in addition to the dams a sizeable sinkhole has opened on Jericho Road in Quinton Township forcing its closure

"The effects of this storm are somewhat unpredictable as new problems continue to arise," said Freeholder Bobbitt, "however the County Road Department will be on call all weekend for any new problem that may develop."

The status of the roads currently closed has not changed and the following roads remain closed:

1. Burlington Road from CR-611 to EFT Road closed due to Greenville Bridge
2. Greenville Road from Olivet Road CR-690 to Grier's Lane closed due to Bridge 1230
3. Olivet Road CR-690 from Dealtown Road CR-612 to Palatine Road CR-608 closed due to road failure.
4. Jericho Road in Quinton Township is now closed between Burden Hill Road and Pecks Corner Road because of a large sinkhole.

"We are hopeful that with the support of our Third District Legislators, and congressional support we will secure the disaster relief that we so desperately need," stated Director Ware.